

Privacy and Confidentiality

Introduction

The Albion Centre provides HIV, hepatitis testing and care, together with free and confidential testing and treatment of sexually transmissible infections (STIs). Health information, psychological and nutritional counselling and specific vaccinations are also offered, and on-site pharmacy services are available for HIV and STI treatments.

Your Personal Information

All clients are requested to fill in a clinic registration form on arrival. We do understand that some clients may not wish to give all the details requested on the form. However, before any service can be provided we do require at least one way of contacting you. Therefore you are asked to indicate on the registration form at least one preferred contact address, and/or phone number and/or email address. Please update these details with reception if they should change at any time in the future. Please also note that we send SMS reminders for future appointments. You can opt out of this process if desired.

Our reception staff will give you a card with your unique 6-digit clinic number and explain its purpose. Please keep this card in a safe place, as it helps us to provide you with future information and care in a timely manner.

Confidentiality

We are required by law to retain a medical record detailing your health information. NSW Health and Albion are committed to safeguarding your medical record and the privacy of all client information. To help do this, your unique clinic number will be linked to your personal and health information and to the ordering of laboratory tests. This information is stored in a fully secured and confidential system on our client computer database under your unique clinic number.

Confidentiality is an integral component of the delivery of care at Albion. All Albion staff, as employees of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, sign a confidentiality agreement. Students and visiting doctors also sign the Albion confidentiality agreement and are aware of their responsibilities in this regard. The personal and clinical information that you provide to us, and the results of all your tests, are treated in the strictest confidence.

Release of Information

Your health information will be provided to other attending health care providers or agencies, *only with your written consent* (unless it is relevant for your care in a medical emergency). Your personal information will not be released from this clinic without your consent, except in specific circumstances when the Centre is obliged to do so. These circumstances include: if you are considered to be at risk of harming yourself or others; if we have knowledge of your involvement in a serious crime; if we have grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of harm; or if we are required by subpoena to release information. However at all times we will still endeavour to ensure that a client's HIV status is maintained as confidential.

To maintain the high level of care that Albion provides, it is sometimes to your benefit that the clinical staff discuss your care within the Centre. (The clinical staff includes doctors, registered nurses, psychologists, nutritionists, pharmacists, social workers and research staff). Sometimes it may also be essential for your care for us to discuss your care with agencies outside Albion. When possible this will be done with your knowledge and consent.

If you have any questions or concerns in regard to the confidentiality and/or security of your health information, please speak with the clinic staff at any time.

Consultations

Trained clinical staff conduct all consultations. The staff will ask you questions about your medical, social and sexual history. A physical examination may be performed. Your visit may include blood tests, urine tests and swabs. HIV, hepatitis and sexual health tests are only carried out with your informed consent.

Students

Albion provides undergraduate and postgraduate student teaching, which includes visiting doctors. Your regular health care provider may ask if you are willing to have a student or visiting doctor participate in your consultation. This will always be undertaken only with your consent, and your care will not be compromised in any way should you decline to see a student or visiting doctor at any time.

Treatment

If the examination and tests show that you need treatment, this will be discussed with you. You may be given some pills, creams or injections, and you may need to return for further treatment. There are some circumstances where you may be referred to another specialist for further consultation and treatment.

Test results

Depending on what tests you are having done, in consultation with your clinician, a decision will be made on how your results are best received. You may be offered various methods for receiving results, such as SMS, phone or in person. Irrespective of your preferred method, in some cases it will be required that you present in person for your results. Most test results will take anywhere from three to ten days to return. With advances in some testing you might be able to get a preliminary test result prior to leaving the Centre.

Medicare

All consultations at Albion are free to clients but if you hold a valid Medicare card you will be asked to provide it for some tests, and for some medical consultations. Medicare cards are also required for a prescription from the Pharmacy. However, if you do not hold a Medicare card, you will still be able to access care, all HIV and STI tests, and STI treatment at Albion. If you are not currently eligible for a Medicare card, please discuss this with your attending doctor or nurse so we can ensure that you can still access all the treatment you require.

If you wish to check your eligibility for a Medicare card, you can contact Medicare enquiries by phoning: 132 011.

Freedom of Information

Copies of all your test results are available to you at the time of an appointment upon request. You will be asked to sign a form giving consent to the release of information.

Under the NSW Freedom of Information Act 1989 you have the right to request access to specified information from your file. Arrangements to do this can be made by requesting an appointment with the Director of Clinical Services. Complete access may be denied in special circumstances where such access would place you or another person at risk of harm.

If you have any queries or concerns about information provided, staff will be happy and able to assist.